

Pesticides are important tools



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Topics : [Health Canada](#) , [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#) , [Canada](#) , [U.S.](#) , [Ottawa](#)

Editor:

Re: 'Buddhist community growth focuses on organic farming' (The Guardian, January 17, 2012): Canada has one of the most modern and stringent regulatory systems in the world. This means that whether the food you eat is grown conventionally or organically, it is among the safest food available anywhere. Unfortunately a recent article in The Guardian provided misinformation about the safety of pesticides that I must correct.

Pesticides are important tools that help farmers provide Canadians with access to an affordable supply of safe and healthy foods, like the fruits, vegetables and whole grains we need to stay healthy.

Both organic and conventionally grown foods use tools like pesticides that are approved through Health Canada - the difference generally is that conventional farmers use modern synthetic products.

Take fruits and vegetables, for example. In instances where trace amounts of pesticides are found, it is usually in the range of parts per million or less - much, much too low to have any impact whatsoever on consumers. In fact, recent data from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency shows that about 88 per cent of all fresh food items and 90 per cent of processed food items show no traces of pesticides at all.

However, even in those instances where minute residue traces are detected, it's important for consumers to understand that Health Canada, which is one of the most respected regulatory agencies in the world, undertakes a thorough scientific review and risk assessment of every pesticide before approving it for use to ensure it does not pose a health risk to farmers using the products or to families at the dinner table.

In addition, the claim made in the article that cancer rates increase from the use of pesticides is not supported by any published evidence. In fact many large studies from Canada and the U.S. show no correlation between pesticide use and cancer, even in farm communities where most pesticides are used.

The fact of the matter is that studies indicate that whether a crop is grown organically or with the help of tools like pesticides or plant biotechnology does not impact the nutritional value of food.

Lorne Hepworth,

president,

CropLife Canada - representing the plant science industry,

Ottawa